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port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevocable.'"[4]

The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Constituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the freedom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on colonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France. One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

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in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[13] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[14] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[23]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows:

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example:

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it.

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA

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created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence. . . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

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In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
>
> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

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The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a

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number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[35] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[36]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

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Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[87]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta; the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[88] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-